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AGONOPTERIX ASTRANTIAE HEINEMANN IN HAMPSHIRE. —

On 9th June 1982 I found six larvae of this species on *Sanicula europaea* in a beech wood near East Meon. The moths emerged from 25th - 27th June, and this is the first record of *astrantiae* in Hampshire. During the last instar many of the larvae bite partially through the upper part of the leaf stalk causing the leaf to wither, and then continue to feed in the wilting folded leaf. This may explain why so few larvae had previously been found, because the leaf then droops below the level of the healthy leaves of the foodplant necessitating careful parting of the leaves in order to find the larvae. This habit was observed independently this year by H. N. Michaelis. — Dr. J. R. LANGMAID, 38 Cumberland Court, Festing Road, Southsea, Hants PO4 ONH.

LOW NUMBERS OF LEPIDOPTERA IN 1981. — My impression in Cumbria is that 1981 was about the poorest year for Lepidoptera on record. Admittedly owing to advancing years I did far less hunting around than I used to do; but it is certainly indisputable that when I was out and about I could find very few specimens of even the commoner species. For instance, on a visit to an area of limestone grassland near the Fairy Steps, Beetham, where there is usually an abundance of Lepidoptera, in warm sunshine on July 12th the scarcity was most depressing. I expected to find *Aricia artaxerxes salmacis* Stephens still out in good numbers, but saw just one. Usually in this area of what used to be South Westmorland, this butterfly is out from about June 15th to July 20th. Other butterflies were very scarce, but two moths helped to save the situation, *Zygaena filipendulae* L. and *Phoedhes captiuncula* Treits., both of which were in good numbers. I even got a photograph of *P. captiuncula* sitting on a leaf — I had almost despaired of ever managing to photograph this moth, for when it is not wildly flying it usually dives deep down in the grass and is disturbed at the slightest touch of the vegetation — a most elusive insect.

The same story of paucity is true of my Mercury Vapour Trap, which I have admittedly operated only spasmodically. But on nights which I selected for operation the results were very sparse, and there were no surprises except negative ones! For instance, I never saw one *Amathes xanthographa* D. & S. Perhaps the nearest to a positive surprise was a *Dasympolia templi* L. on October 1st. Does my experience tally with that of most other Lepidopterists? — Rev. J. H. VINE HALL, "Rivendell", 3, The Green, Melmerby, Penrith, Cumbria CA10 1HG.